



City and County of the City of Exeter.

EDUCATION COMMITTEE.

ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
School Medical Officer
FOR THE
CITY AND COUNTY OF
THE CITY OF EXETER
1941

SCHOOL MEDICAL STAFF.

School Medical Officer and Medical Officer of Health.

GEORGE F. B. PAGE, M.D., D.P.H., Edin.

Assistant School Medical Officers.

JESSIE SMITH, M.B., Ch.B., D.P.H., Leeds.

ROBERT P. BOYD, M.B., Ch.B., D.P.H., Glas., F.R.F.P.S.G.
(and Deputy M.O.H.).

ELEANOR PATTERSON, M.B., B.S., B.Hyg., D.P.H., Durham.
J. D. C. SWAN, M.B., Ch.B., Glas. (Temporary).

School Dental Surgeon.

GEORGE VALENTINE SMALLWOOD, L.D.S., Eng.

Assistant School Dental Surgeons.

THOMAS L. FIDDICK, L.D.S., Eng. (Temporary).

HORACE J. V. WEBSTER, L.D.S., Eng. (Temporary),
Joined 1/3/41.

School Nurses.

MISS C. A. KNUCKEY.*

MISS B. M. KNUCKEY.*

MISS M. M. FOY.*

MISS D. HICKSON.*

MISS A. H. EDDS.*

MISS G. M. LUNN* (Left 30/11/41).

MISS D. KERRIDGE* (Left 31/3/41).

MISS M. E. BLACK* (Temporary).

MRS. F. M. HOCKING* (Temporary).

MISS M. HARRIS* (Joined 1/5/41).

MISS M. FIFE, } Lent by the London
MISS D. M. STARKEY } County Council.

Dental Attendants.

MISS P. E. JOHNSON (Left 22/11/41).

MISS D. F. CHESNUTT.

MISS O. M. FIDDICK (Temporary).

MRS. H. M. HORNE (Temporary) (Joined 24/11/41).

Clerks.

W. G. LOTT.

MISS D. E. BUNNY (Temporary).

J. BALKWILL (Temporary) (Left 5/4/41).

MISS B. R. STARKS (Temporary).

R. COLLARD (15/4/41—11/11/41).

A. J. CASLEY (Temporary) (Joined 1/12/41).

*Also Health Visitors.

The following are on Active Service :—

CLIFFORD A. REYNOLDS, Dental Surgeon.

RALPH BUDGE, Clerk..

Annual Report

OF THE

School Medical Officer

FOR THE

CITY AND COUNTY OF THE CITY OF EXETER.

1941.

To the Chairman and Members of the Education Committee.

I have the honour to submit my report upon the Medical Inspection of School Children for the year 1941. In accordance with instructions received from the Board of Education in a circular letter dated 31st December, 1941, the report has been limited to certain specified matters and the statistical material has been greatly curtailed.

(a) Staff.

As reported in greater detail in previous years, the whole of the staff takes part in the work of the Public Health Department as well as the School Medical Department, with the exception of the clerks and the nurses lent by the London County Council.

Mr. H. J. V. Webster, dental surgeon, joined the staff in a temporary capacity on 1st March, 1941, when Mr. C. A. Reynolds joined the Forces.

Health Visitors devote one-third of their time to school medical work. As the City is divided into health districts, the same nursing staff supervises the welfare of children from birth onwards. Once again I should like to pay tribute to the excellent services the staff has rendered in expanding the work of the department to meet the changing situation. I desire to mention especially Dr. J. Smith, Senior Assistant Medical Officer, Mr. Smallwood, Senior Dental Surgeon, and Mr. Lott, Clerk in charge.

(b) Changes in Arrangements for Medical, Dental and Cleanliness Inspections.

It is satisfactory to record that the full machinery of the Department has been kept running with one exception. This was the arrangement for the operative treatment of tonsils and adenoids which was suspended for a considerable portion of the year, as the accommodation at the City Hospital was required

for another purpose. I am pleased to be able to report that full facilities are again available. Figures quoted below will show that extensive use has been made of the minor ailment clinics and particularly of the dental clinics. All the routine age groups have been subjected to medical inspection, together with a substantial number of special cases and re-examinations.

This has meant a great deal of hard work on the part of all concerned, not least the clerical staff, whose duty it is to collate and preserve the records. The figures in brackets are for 1940 :—

Total attendances, 1941, at Central Clinic,	9,221	(9,346).
" " 1941, Western	6,975	(6,146).
" " 1941, Eastern	7,236	(6,437).
" " 1941, Dental	9,083	(6,385).

There has been a striking increase in the amount of dental work carried out by the Department.

There has been no change in the arrangements for cleanliness inspections. The number of individual children found unclean was 2,346 (1,416), giving a percentage of 23.9 (13.0), the highest recorded during the past ten years. The percentage of unclean children in 1939 was 12.2, and the previous three years averaged round about 10.0. These figures include *all cases* of dirty heads, however slight the infestation.

As is well known, the incidence of scabies suddenly increased without obvious reason all over the country in 1937. Even so, we had only some thirty or forty cases a year in school children. Since the outbreak of war there has been a very sharp rise indeed everywhere, due to shelter life, evacuation, unofficial migration and war conditions generally.

The number of families treated in 1940 was 167, comprising 288 individuals. In 1941 as many as 468 families came under notice, comprising 950 individuals.

Scabies is a family disease and unless all infected members of a family are properly treated and the causal parasite destroyed, it will certainly recur. Whatever method of treatment is employed should be thoroughly understood and followed by all concerned, doctors, nurses and patients alike. No disease so lends itself to sound routine methods, and no disease responds less to slipshod treatment. Some cases are difficult to diagnose, especially infection in habitually clean people.

The Cleansing Centre provided by the Public Health Committee is available for treatment both of dirty heads and scabies. In-patient treatment was provided at the Annexe (formerly Children's Home) of the City Hospital and for evacuee children at the Sick Bay. Domiciliary treatment under supervision,

with printed instructions and free medicaments, has also proved useful in many cases.

The main points are to treat at once, to treat thoroughly, and to have the intelligent co-operation of the patients.

Towards the end of the year a very welcome decline in incidence was noted as the result of these lines of attack.

(c) Additions to or Curtailment of the Arrangements for Various Forms of Treatment or the Provision of Solid Meals or Milk.

There have been no changes in the arrangements for treatment other than the temporary interruption of the operative treatment for tonsils and adenoids already mentioned.

Since 1938 all school departments have adopted the official scheme for the provision of milk and meals.

Free milk in appropriate cases under arrangements approved by the Board has been available since 12th October, 1940. The Board by their Circular, No. 1567, dated 21st October, 1941, decided that the sole criterion for free milk should be a needs-test based on the family income. So that it would seem that common-sense has prevailed at last. We shall now endeavour to *prevent* malnutrition occurring in the children of the less well off, instead of waiting for some sign or symptom which can be made the basis of a medical certificate.

The scheme for solid meals, including free solid meals outlined in the Report for 1940, came into operation on 13th January, 1941.

The Central Kitchen is capable of cooking for 2,000 persons at a time. The meals are distributed in special insulated containers to four feeding centres, namely :—

Exe Island Mission Hall, Exe Island.

St. Matthew's Church Hall, Clifton Road.

City Mission Hall, Eurnthouse Lane.

St. Mark's Church Hall, Manston Road.

The menus are as varied and nutritious as conditions permit, and amounts served are adequate. The School Medical Officer has been consulted in these matters and the observations of the Board's advisors received.

The cost of dinner under the scheme is 4d. per meal. Milk meals and solid meals are served on five days a week during term. During the Christmas holidays meals were provided as an experiment at three centres, and milk was available at fourteen centres.

During the first week, 1,622 milk meals were supplied daily, and during the second week 1,083, against an average daily total during term time of 8,122. The demand for solid meals was so small as scarcely to justify the trouble of organisation. The work was carried out voluntarily by teachers, members of the school enquiry staff and others, assisted by the Exeter Housewives Group.

The latest available figures (February, 1942) show that whereas 84.7 per cent. of children are taking milk, only 7.1 per cent. avail themselves of solid meals.

(d) Changes in Certified Special Schools Maintained by the Authority.

None maintained.

EVACUATION AND RECEPTION.

The year has seen a steady drift home or elsewhere of the official and unofficial evacuees who came to the City in 1940. There is still, however, a very considerable temporary population.

At the end of the year the figures were :—

	1940.	1941.
Official evacuees	4,717	2,439
Refugees	848	456
Total	<hr/> 5,565	<hr/> 2,895

The hostels for children who for any reason cannot be billeted have remained fairly full. There is one for boys with a capacity of 40, and two for girls with a joint capacity of 40. Very small boys are billeted in one of the girls' hostels. The additional accommodation provided for evacuated schools was given on page 6 of last year's Report.

NUTRITION.

In last year's Report a summary of various investigations since 1934 was given.

Ignoring children classified as "D," cases which are almost always due to illness rather than actual lack of proper food, it was shown that the number of children in Exeter found to be showing signs of slightly subnormal nutrition, and therefore classified as "C," averaged 15 per cent. during the years 1935-1939 inclusive.

In 1940 the number of "C" children as assessed by the Assistant School Medical Officers was 8.9 per cent., and in 1941 only 4 per cent. This does not mean that there has been a sur-

prising improvement in nutrition under war conditions. It is merely the expression of the varying standards adopted by different examiners. The final figure is influenced by the proportion of inspection work allotted to different examiners. Up to 1939 the inspection of elementary school children in the City was carried out almost entirely by one officer. From September, 1939, to September, 1940, it was divided more or less equally between two officers. A third officer then joined the staff and has taken an increasing part in the work of routine inspections. It is quite clear, therefore, that we are dealing with an alteration in standards rather than an alteration in the state of the children examined.

To obtain comparable figures it is necessary to have recourse to the results of special nutrition surveys carried out by one officer (Dr. Smith), who happens to be the officer who did most of the work between 1935 and 1939.

These figures given below show that there has been no appreciable change in the nutrition of elementary school children in the City during the war, and certainly no deterioration. This is satisfactory and is a tribute to the good work done by the Ministry of Food.

Results of Nutrition Surveys.

B.8
Central Exeter, Northern Exeter,

	1940.	1941.
Number of children examined	1,249	1,041
In Class "A" (above average)	$147=11.8\%$	$122=11.6\%$
" " "B" (average)	$905=72.5\%$	$779=72.6\%$
" " "C" (below average)	$197=15.7\%$	$141=13.5\%$
" " "D" (bad)	<i>Nil</i>	$2=0.19\%$
Number having milk regularly	$736=58.8\%$	$723=69.2\%$
Number having milk occasionally	$100=8.0\%$	$72=6.8\%$
Number not having milk	$413=33.1\%$	$249=23.8\%$

Those not taking milk were analysed further :—

Disliked milk	$122=29.5\%$	$103=41.3\%$
Had sufficient elsewhere	$52=12.5\%$	$3=1.2\%$
Stated they could not afford milk	$101=24.0\%$	$48=15.3\%$
Miscellaneous reasons	$138=33.3\%$	$95=38.1\%$

In the Central Survey it will be noted that 101 children alleged financial reasons for not taking a milk meal. Of those, 8 were in Class "A," and 72 in Class "B," leaving 21 in Class "C."

In the Northern Survey, 48 children alleged that they could not afford milk. Of these, 38 were classed as "B," and 10 as "C." The Board's policy set out in Circular No. 1567 should make it easier to deal with these cases.

In no case was it alleged that milk was not always available.

The milk supplied to all schools is pasteurised. Frequent examinations by the Public Health Department show that the standard is satisfactory.

I am, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

G. F. B. PAGE,

School Medical Officer.

STATISTICS.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS, 1941.

Elementary School Population	9,796
No. of Elementary Schools	36
No. of Departments	39

TABLE I.

**Medical Inspections and Treatment Returns, 1st January to
31st December, 1941.**

A.—ROUTINE MEDICAL INSPECTIONS.

Number of Inspections in the prescribed Groups :—

Entrants .....	.....	.....	.....	2,063
Second Age Group .....	.....	.....	.....	612
Third Age Group .....	.....	.....	.....	684
		Total	.....	<u>3,359</u>

Number of other Routine Inspections *Nil*

B.—OTHER INSPECTIONS.

Number of Special Inspections and Re-Inspections 6,686

TABLE II.

CLASSIFICATION OF THE NUTRITION OF CHILDREN
INSPECTED DURING THE YEAR IN THE ROUTINE
AGE GROUPS.

Age-Groups.	Number of Children Inspected.	A (Excellent)		B (Normal)		C (Slightly subnormal)		D (Bad)	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Entrants	2063	825	39.9	1172	56.9	66	3.2	—	—
Second Age-Group	612	170	27.7	408	66.6	34	5.5	—	—
Third Age-Group	684	275	40.2	375	54.8	34	4.8	—	—
Other Routine Inspections	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Total	3359	1270	37.8	1955	58.2	134	4.0	—	—

Group II.—Treatment of Defective Vision and Squint (excluding Minor Eye Defects treated as Minor Ailments—Group I).

		Number of Defects dealt with.		
		Under the Authority's Scheme.	Otherwise.	Total.
Errors of Refraction (including squint)	695	—	—	695
Other defect or diseases of the eyes	41	—	—	41
Total	736	—	—	736
No. of Children for whom spectacles were :—	—	—	—	—
(a) Prescribed	514	—	—	514
(b) Obtained	511	—	—	511

Group I.—Treatment of Minor Ailments (excluding Uncleanliness, for which see Table V).

Total number of defects treated under the Authority's Scheme	3,907
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TABLE V.

VERMINOUS CONDITIONS.

(i) Average number of visits per school made during the year by the School Nurse	9
(ii) Total number of examinations of children in the Schools by the School Nurses	35,807
(iii) Number of <i>individual</i> children found unclean	2,346
(iv) Number of <i>individual</i> children cleansed under Section 87 (2) and (3) of the Education Act, 1921	130
(v) Number of cases in which legal proceedings were taken :—	
(a) Under the Education Act, 1921	<i>Nil</i>
(b) Under School Attendance Byelaws	<i>Nil</i>

TABLE VI.**BLIND AND DEAF CHILDREN.**

Number of totally or almost totally blind and deaf children who are *not* at the present time receiving education suitable for their special needs. The return relates to all such children, including evacuees, resident in the Authority's area

Nil

MENTALLY DEFECTIVE CHILDREN.

Total number of children notified during the year ended 31st December, 1941, by the Local Education Authority to the Local Mental Deficiency Authority under the Mental Deficiency (Notification of Children) Regulations, 1928

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Group III.—Treatment of Defects of Nose and Throat.

NUMBER OF DEFECTS.			
Received Operative Treatment.		Received other forms of treatment.	Total number treated.
Under the Authority's Scheme, in Clinic or Hospital.	By Private Practitioner or Hospital, apart from the Authority's Scheme.		
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
160	Nil	—	160

TABLE IV.

DENTAL INSPECTION AND TREATMENT.

(1) Number of children inspected by the Dentist.

(a) Routine age-groups—

Age	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	Total.
Number	11	219	874	1248	1173	1160	1156	1190	1038	1006	581	188	142	9928

(b) Specials 749

(c) TOTAL (Routine and Specials) 10,677

(2) Number found to require treatment 5,339

(3) Number actually treated 4,034

(4) Attendances made by children for treatment 9,083

(5) Half-days devoted to :—	Inspection	101	(7) Extractions :—	Permanent Teeth	1,908
	Treatment	1,317		Temporary Teeth	7,130
	Total	1,418		Total	9,038

(6) Fillings :—	Permanent Teeth	4,702	(8) Administration of general anaesthetics for extractions	2,442
	Temporary Teeth	405		
	Total	5,107		

(9) Other Operations :—	Permanent Teeth	1,039
	Temporary Teeth	393
	Total	1,432

Secondary School
and
Junior Technical School
1941

TABLE I.

Return of Medical Inspection, 1st January to 31st December, 1941.

INSPECTED :—

School.	Examinations.		Total.
	Complete.	Curtailed.	
Junior Technical (Boys)	66	—	66
Hele's (Boys)	299	170	469
Total	365	170	535

The number of boys at the Junior Technical School found to require treatment was 10 = 15%.

The number of boys at Hele's School found to require treatment was 41 = 8.7%.